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LETTERS

ON

EMIGRATION.

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[Price Two Shillings.]

Rec<sup>d</sup> May 1. 1845

Bought with the request of his  
Hon. Wm Prescott, of Berlin

The winter is no friend to emigration

E. M. I. C. R. A. T. I. O. N.

[Emigration]



11/6.  
No. 4 Franklin  
LETTERS

ON

EMIGRATION.

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BY A GENTLEMAN,

LATELY RETURNED FROM AMERICA.

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# LETTERS

ON

## EMIGRATION.

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### LETTER I.

MY DEAR SIR,

London, Sept. 1794.

THE interest which you take in the welfare of some persons in your neighbourhood, is, I am convinced, your motive for wishing to have from me an early opinion on the subject of Emigration to America.—You are desirous of being enabled to inform the little country gentleman, who

B

pines

*m*



pines with regret at the superior appearance  
 of his more opulent neighbour, that even  
 in America, Republican America, riches  
 confer distinction ; and that however the  
 laws may breathe equality, usage and the  
 manners of private life (more powerful  
 than law among persons of any condition)  
 point out that rank which each individual  
 is to hold in society ; and that a respect for  
 subordination is a useful lesson, which may  
 be acquired with more ease and less ex-  
 pence by remaining at home, than in  
 crossing the Atlantic : such a person may  
 indeed free himself from the distinctions of  
 society, but he must previously retreat into  
 the desarts of the country. Further, you  
 wish to inform the ingenious artisan, that,  
 in emigrating, he cannot be certain of en-  
 couragement, and that numbers as ingeni-  
 ous as himself are constantly returning for  
 want of employment. Nor will you fail to  
 suggest

suggest to the husbandman, that land may be purchased too dear, even if given gratis to him, when it requires the labour of years to force scanty crops from grounds indifferently cleared, and where the vapours exhaling from a new damp soil, now for the first time exposed to the influence of the sun, are certain of entailing on the cultivators, agues, and other enervating disorders.

If, Sir, I can succeed in assisting you to impress these truths on the minds of persons such as I have described, by the accounts I can transmit to you, I shall experience some portion of that satisfaction, which an ingenuous mind must feel, in the consciousness of having saved those, whom advice can influence, from ruin.

I will suppose the dangers of the sea escaped, and that our emigrant is landed half-starved at New York—You will pro-

bably smile at the expression *half-starved* as an exaggeration, but it is what in fact usually happens.

How it came to pass that seamen have obtained a character for extraordinary generosity, I know not; but certain I am, from my own experience, and the testimony of others, that there does not exist a more sordid penurious race than the captains of passage and merchant vessels. The provisions they in general lay in are not only inferior in quality, but so scanty in quantity, that I have known, even in the course of a short voyage, every comfortable article to fail before one half of the voyage had been completed; in this case there can be no resource but the common ship provision, namely, salt-beef and pork, so impregnated with brine, that persons accustomed to the common decencies of life cannot be prevailed on to use them, but in the last extremity.

One



One alternative alone is left them, that of putting up with messes composed of oatmeal and molasses, or dumplins.

This I assure you is no aggravated statement; I speak from experience; and I can further assure you, that I have known gentlemen of undoubted veracity, who, from the parsimonious disposition of the captain, must have perished for absolute want of any kind of provisions, had they been two days longer at sea.

The indifferent treatment which I am going to relate, I myself experienced.

The Captain of the vessel in which I sailed from England, acquainted me, when I applied to him for a passage, that he was not much accustomed to take passengers, and that if I sailed with him, I must supply myself; at the same time adding, that whatever quantity of live stock and liquors I laid in, he would procure as much more

on his own account. This arrangement appeared to me perfectly satisfactory ;—but behold, in a day or two after we had sailed, I discovered that he had not purchased an ounce of fresh provisions on his own account, nor a single bottle of wine.

You know, my dear Sir, that I have as much of the social principle about me as most men ; but here was a distressing dilemma, I was every day to sit down to table with the Captain and his two sons, who had no other entertainment but that of salt-beef or pork. To make a solitary feast is not in my nature, I therefore always caused them to participate with me. Those who have been at sea with the prospect of a long voyage, and a perfect distaste to salt provisions, know the value of such a sacrifice. I could not occasionally avoid feeling some indignation arise within me at this paltry breach of faith, which the peculiar  
situation

situation we were in alone rendered important. In addition to this, some of the sailors stole half my wine. Can you conceive that under all these circumstances, the Captain made a difficulty of letting me have water for my poultry? and yet nothing is more true than that he absolutely took merit to himself for letting me have it, alledging that water was invaluable at sea.

The knowledge of a number of similar cases authorises me to advise those whom business requires to take long voyages, never to trust to that supply which the Captain affords, but always to have additional conveniences, such as a small case of cordial liquors, seagoe, preserved fruits, additional wine, tea and sugar of superior quality, portable soup, and a good stock of those biscuits which our bakers distinguish by the name of American. I know no article more necessary than this last—little matters



of this kind, where ladies are concerned, are absolutely indispensable. In almost every step we take in life some degree of caution is requisite, but in few more than in the selection of the person under whose guidance and protection we place ourselves in a voyage ; I say protection, because it is in the power of those persons, who have the command of vessels, to render your time, if they are perverse, extremely uncomfortable. Elevated from the lowest stations, as they generally are, to the command of a ship, and unacquainted with those decorums which obtain among the better orders of society, they esteem command as a licence for outrage, and have frequently been guilty of the most enormous.

What prudence would suggest on such an occasion is, to get a friend to introduce you to a respectable merchant of the port from whence you sail, and for him to negotiate

gociate the business of the passage with the captain ; this will prove the steadiest check on the conduct of the latter, who is naturally solicitous to support his character with mercantile men. Another caution is also material, on the conduct necessary to adopt to those who are passengers with you. The person who undertakes a long voyage ought to lay in a *double stock of his usual complacency*—the situation requires it ; there are so many inconveniences to sustain, the conveniences are so few, and so many opposite pretensions to encounter, that unless a man knows when and how to yield, he will pass but a sorry time of it. Every person who is a cabin passenger, be his rank or condition in life what it may, starts with an equal claim to attention, and will often enforce it without a strict regard to the *etiquettes* of refined society.—The grievance however most to be apprehended is, that in

a *groupe*, which is usually a motley one, one or two troublesome characters may be found, whose jarrings and competitions shall disturb the harmony of the whole. Such men frequently, without any pretension, assume the most disgusting airs of consequence—speak in the most imposing tone, of the connections they have left behind, and the property they carry with them—aware that character and situation cannot then be scrutinized, they take a temporary credit for the best—and, by their whole deportment, seem determined to evince, that whatever opinion the world they have left might entertain, that whither they are going should be prepared to think highly of them, from the report of their companions in the voyage.

Need I mention that such characters should, as much as the situation will admit, be kept at arm's length? how shall I express the contempt which the conduct of such men

has



has excited in me ? whom I have known, on being opposed in conversation, to propose an immediate duel, in a place where they were well aware it would not be permitted, and afterwards shrinking into a very small compass, and by concession disarming resentment, when the prospect of land convinced them that chastisement was soon to be apprehended, and that their pretensions had only to be examined to become ridiculous.

Few situations can be more melancholy than that of the steerage passengers (among whom are comprehended the redemptioners) : they are pent up together in a narrow place ; if they have any bedding, they must furnish it themselves ; and I can with truth assure you, that I have seen some of them sitting below on the cables that are coiled up, when the small distance from the deck would not permit them to remain erect even in that posture. The horrors of such a situation

tion in a winter's passage can scarcely be described. Without fire, without comforts, and scantily provided even with common necessaries, nothing can add to the misery of the scene, unless it be the consideration that women and children are often in the number of the sufferers ; if any thing could be conceived to aggravate their distress, it is that many of these poor people, who return from America, dread the ridicule and reproaches of their relations and acquaintance, for having left friends and family in search of ideal wealth, and thus wasted in idle wanderings, that means, which would have given energy and effect to their industry, if exercised at home.

Believe me to be,

&c, &c.

*Note.*—The price of a passage from London to New York or Philadelphia, is thirty guineas to a cabin passenger, who is provided with

with every thing, bedding excepted; returning he pays twenty-five. The reason of this distinction is, that stock is laid in somewhat cheaper in those places than in London; and that, westerly winds being more prevalent than any others, shorter passages are usually made from America than to it. A mattress will be found more convenient and portable for a voyage, than a bed of feathers. From the other English ports, and from those of Scotland and Ireland, a passage may be obtained on more reasonable terms, with the exception of Falmouth; those who embark at that port, in the English Packet for New York, paying forty guineas.

LET.



## LETTER II.

London, September —, 1794.

DEAR SIR,

THAT passion for novelty which more or less affects every human mind, whose elastic spring has not been broken by repeated disappointments, usually supports the spirits of adventurers on their arrival in America. The first object is to recruit their strength after the fatigues of the voyage; letters of recommendation are presented, and invitations received and accepted; churches, steeples, public walks, and the theatre all visited and admired, till things become so familiar that one feels precisely as if one were *at home*, and then the charm ceases!—Languor steals on apace: to encounter

counter this, friends are consulted how the object of the voyage is to be best accomplished, namely, to settle in the country, and purchase an estate (I must now be understood as describing the progress of the gentleman emigrant): one praises the State of Vermont, it is pointed out as a rising State; another votes for an establishment in the Jerseys, or Pennsylvania, as being always sure of a market for produce; a third recommends that of New York itself, and hints that he has a friend with a property to dispose of that would suit him exactly, and, what is better than all, this friend is the most conscientious man in all America at striking a bargain; all the rest of your friends declare for Kentucky; in a word, a settlement in Kentucky seems to be the *rage* of the day in both worlds, from the auctioneer in Hyde's coffee-house at New York, who, in disposing

disposing of a lot, dwells on its buffaloes, its Ohio, the depth and mellowness of its soil; to Dr. Priestley at Hackney; all are loud in praise of Kentucky. Of Kentucky I shall speak in another place. We are told that 'in a multitude of counsellors there is safety,' but here it produces nothing but perplexity, the emigrant is divided in his choice; as he wishes his establishment to be permanent, he probably determines to judge for himself, and commences with making the *tour* of Vermont \*. This is an inland State, which, at the close of the American war, associated itself with the others, in opposition to Britain: it lies north of the

*Note.*—I shall at present confine myself to the views of the gentleman who emigrates, and afterwards touch on those points which are peculiar to the shopkeeper, the artisan, and farmer.

State



State of New York. The principal town in Vermont is that of Burlington ; it consists of a few wooden houses, neat in their construction, but which could hold out no inducement, in either the town or neighbourhood, to any person beyond the ordinary rank in life to settle. Its inhabitants seem to derive their support from what they call ' keeping tavern,' paltry shopkeeping, or working as carpenters ; in England it would be considered as a small village. Through a great part of the country there are no regular roads for any carriage, being mostly narrow tracks, cut through the woods, where either man or horse runs continual risk of stumbling, from the number of stumps of underwood, which have been but imperfectly cleared away. Part of this State is bordered by Lake Champlain, which communicates with Canada ; hence a few of the inhabitants derive an occasional profit from

a contraband trade in furs, for which there is a great demand in the neighbouring States, for the use of hatters and others.

On a survey of this State, the Emigrant perceives, that he could not possibly purchase any establishment that would suit him, without giving up every hope of adequate society. True, he has relinquished that of Europe ; but he is not therefore prepared to associate with those, whose thoughts are little elevated beyond the attainment of a moderate subsistence, and whose ideas are as wild as the woods that surround them.

Vermont is therefore abandoned by him : all idea of settling in the provinces of New England is precluded, by the information he receives, that those countries are in a higher state of cultivation than any other part of America, and consequently that a single farm of any extent would cost him that sum with which he expects to purchase

a con-

a considerable tract of land ; he retraces his steps towards New York, and by the way arrives at Albany.

Albany is an ancient Dutch settlement, and its inhabitants retain all the manners of their European progenitors.

An inquisitive mind often forms, from minute circumstances, ideas general and just : At Albany, the doors of most of the houses are divided : if you have business with the master of a family, the upper part is thrown open, but there is no passing the barrier which the lower part opposes to you—it is kept close bolted : in this manner your business is arranged.

Ought a man to be accused of presumption, who would from hence conclude, that the inhabitants were in general selfish and inhospitable, and that society must be at a low ebb in Albany ? Whilst here, a pleasant anecdote was related to me :—“ An English

C 2 :

farmer



farmer and his wife had arrived in this city, with the idea of settling in its neighbourhood. The people at the inn where they resided had remarked their attachment to London bottled porter, of which on an average they drank more than a dozen a day : in consequence of this, the master of the inn had put all the cellars of the retailers of that liquor *in a state of requisition*. The farmer had already made some progress towards a purchase, when, returning one day, and demanding his usual beverage, he was informed that he had drunk them dry. Finding this to be the case, and that no supply could be obtained, regardless of the half-finished bargain, the farmer and his wife fairly took their flight to some other region more fertile in malt."

There is in the neighbourhood of this city a considerable tract of ground, in a high state of cultivation ; the proprietor of

it is a gentleman of Dutch extraction, of the name of Van Rassaer; he is styled, as an honourable distinction, the *Grand Patron*—probably the forefathers of his present tenants emigrated under the guidance of his ancestor. This tract lies on either bank of Hudson's River, and brings in a considerable income. This river is navigable from Troy, a town ten miles above this city, to New York; the distance from hence by water to New York is about 180 miles, where you usually arrive in three days.

Our Emigrant is once more landed at New York, and has received one piece of instruction by his *tour*, viz. that though trees increase the value of an estate in England, it is far otherwise in America. His friends are again consulted: he determines on making a *tour* through all the States, and proceeds southward to Georgia: he is everywhere, from his description as a man of property,

who wishes to purchase land, received with respect ; but everywhere finds, when he comes to touch on the subject of purchase-money, notwithstanding all the hospitality he experiences, that the demand exceeds what he had been prepared to expect ; nor can he help suspecting that a part of this excess is to be attributed to the circumstance of his being a stranger. Independent of this, he perceives, from the extreme heat of the climate, that though Negroes might work his estate, he must pass the greatest part of his time in reclusive languor and lassitude, deprived of that wholesome invigorating exercise to which he had been accustomed in England. It is true, in the southern parts of America, the manners of the inhabitants approach nearer to those of the Europeans than in any other, as it has been the custom for the better class to send their children there for education. So excessive



cessive is the heat in those parts, that, independent of the indolence which it occasions, it appears to have made considerable impression on the human frame.—In the Carolinas and Virginia, the inhabitants have no appearance of what we term complexion; their bodies are wasted away by a continual perspiration, which brings on an early old age. The men are deemed old after forty years, and the women after thirty.

If there were no other obstacle, this alone would be sufficient to prevent many modern settlements in the Southern States.—No man of common sense can be supposed voluntarily to make choice of a country for establishment, where the climate has a tendency to abridge his own life, and that of his children, of one-third of their natural duration.

From these and other inconveniences, the views of emigrants (commercial ones ex-

cepted) are usually confined to establishments in one of the five following States, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky. Of Vermont I have already spoken as not likely, in its present situation, to interest the attention of a man of any property; all the other States, with the exception of Kentucky, are in general in a forward state of cultivation in the neighbourhood of the principal towns; this remark particularly applies to Jersey and Pennsylvania. If the Emigrant purchases property in the vicinity of New York, Philadelphia, &c. for the sake of society, he in a great measure counteracts those views with which he left Europe; for, being in a high state of cultivation, it sells proportionably dear. The general object of such persons is to purchase uncultivated grounds at a cheap rate, which are expected eventually to turn out considerably advantageous

vantageous to the family of the purchaser, who usually takes some families with him, for the purpose of colonizing.

When I consider the ordinary habits of a gentleman, and a man of education, most strenuously would I dissuade such a man from this attempt. The ardour of enterprise would soon abate, and the stumps of trees continue most steadily fixed in his grounds, baffling every hope of abundant harvests, till, in the lapse of many years, they grew rotten in the earth. The roots of the numerous trees spread so wide that they take up much the greater part of a field, and, in addition, act as powerful suckers, to draw off the strength of the soil for their support from those patches of ground which are clear, and in which crops can be sown. The price of labour is so dear in America, that any attempt to dig out those stumps would be attended with

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an expence which no profit to be expected could recompense. Various trials have been made, by the skilful in mechanics, to aid this purpose, but in vain ; the various direction of the roots, the quantity of earth to be set in motion, and the injury which any instrument would receive from the stones and hard substances it must encounter, have caused the hope of obtaining any effectual assistance from the mechanic powers, in this effort, to be given up. That engine which was said to have had the most practical success, was an invention of the celebrated Sir William Johnson, who tried it some years back in Canada. The principle he proceeded on was a just one ; but it was found, that this engine would require so much assistance to work it, as would render it unprofitable—as a curiosity it is worthy of mention.

In that very scientific work, intituled ‘Jef-

ferfon's Notes,' the author fupposes that moft farms in America have had three mafters.—First, the poor needy adventurer, whose labour, and that of his family, make fome progress in cultivation, by levelling trees, grubbing up a few odd ftumps here and there, and building a \* log-house for their refidence. In a few years he perceives that induftry alone will not avail.—A new adventurer presents himfelf, who has fome property : he purchafes the intereft of the firft (who is enabled to renew his labour with the aid of a fmall capital), and thus becomes the fecond proprietor of the farm.

*Note.*

\* A log-house is one, the walls of which are compofed of trunks of trees in a rude ftate, cut to a certain length, and faftened by wooden pins; the crevices are ftopped by fome kind of ordinary cement.

This

This man fences in the grounds, divides them into fields, clears a greater tract of land, erects a new and better house with a barn, plants an orchard, and stocks the farm with cattle, who contribute to manure it. This man also, either through a passion for novelty, an advantageous offer, or some other cause, is induced to dispose of his farm.—The third owner is usually a man who has a capital sufficient for every purpose of farming: he gives his new acquisition, in the course of a few years, every advantage of which it is capable, and, building a better house, becomes the fixed permanent proprietor of the soil.—Such has been the progress of cultivation in America.

The eye of a master effects much, and without it nothing could be done in this country; but how far the unremitting attention which this implies, would suit with the habits of a man possessed of a moderate independ-



independence in England, and a cultivated mind, I leave those to determine who are acquainted with the state of American society. We have heard of a Franklin, a Jefferson, and a Hamilton; but men so endowed are rarely to be met, and are usually resident in the great towns, occupied by the affairs of official departments; whilst our Emigrant, cut off in a back settlement from the endearing charm of social converse, reaps scanty harvests, to turn which to account, he must convey them to a distant market—His mind, superior to that of his neighbours, in vain looks for an interchange of sentiment—His opinions are either not understood, or become matter of ridicule to those around him. The mind fraught with intelligence which it cannot communicate, preys on itself—it loathes the present, and desponds as to the future.—Should it turn to books, it proves matter of  
aggra-

aggravation—It increafes a ftore already become burthenfome.

When fuch a man looks on his children fpringing up to maturity with uncultivated minds and awkward manners, how muft he regret the rafhnefs which drove him to feek for happinefs in the woods, which cut them off from the ordinary chances of education, and rendered them as aliens in the eyes of their natural connections in England !

Writers on the fubject of America are wont to be lavish in their praifes of this country ; but he who has been fecluded from the cheerful haunts of men, will foon think that ‘a blade of grafs is everywhere the fame ;’—that the profpect of hill and dale, mountain and valley, is to be found in Europe as well as America ; and that if our navigable rivers are not equal to thofe of that country, they convey to us more of  
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the comforts and elegancies of life. Finally, he will be sensible that it is society alone which gives a colour to existence; that in every clime may be obtained the mere sustenance which supports animal life; but that it is intellectual communication alone that distinguishes us from the world of brutes.

LETTER



## LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

London, Sept. 1794.

IF a gentleman emigrates from England single, without a family, I would recommend to him, on his arrival at New York, to fix himself at the *Tontine* coffee-house; he will find as elegant accommodations at this hotel as in any in London—it is generally considered as the best in the United States. If he declares his intention of continuing any time, he may stipulate for very reasonable terms. I have been informed that a single person may be accommodated with a handsome apartment and board at the rate of between seventy or eighty pounds a year, wine and porter excepted—every thing will be served in the neatest manner.

manner. The dinner, which is in ordinary, usually consists of from twelve to sixteen dishes. An advantage peculiar to this house is, that it is frequented by all genteel strangers, and the superior gentlemen of the town, so that whatever benefit can be derived from information is here to be obtained.

The master of the *Tontine* is Mr. Hyde, a native of England; I have seldom seen any man better qualified for such a situation.

I do not know any other coffee-house worthy of mention in New York.

Another mode of living in this city is, to take board and lodging in a private family. There are many houses of this description: the best is that of Mrs. Loring in the *Broad Way*; for accommodation in this family you pay seven dollars a week, wine and porter excepted. The usual rates are from four to six dollars; the best houses of the latter de-

D                      scription

scription are in Wall-street, which is a central situation, and contiguous to the *Tontine* Coffee-house. On the whole, a residence at this coffee-house is to be preferred, as you are always certain of society if you wish to remain in company. If the stranger has a family, and intends continuing any time in this city, his best plan would be to take a house, or part of one: the situation I would prefer would be in one of those streets which run from the *Broad Way* down to the North River. House rent is in general very high: butchers meat is much cheaper than in England, but infinitely inferior in quality; one cause of which probably may be, that they do not give it time to come to perfection. Beeves are usually killed at three and four years old, and sheep proportionably early; in consequence of which, these meats have not that consistency, nor are their juices so high



flavoured as with us. Poultry is very abundant and very cheap in this market ; turkies and geese may be purchased for about half-a-crown apiece, and fowls for a shilling : they are not however so well fed as in England. I did not see that abundance of game in the markets of this place that I expected. Their venison is poor and tasteless, without any of that ferine flavour, which distinguishes ours from ordinary meats : most of the haunches that I saw had not a single ounce of fat. Fish is in general in great plenty and cheap : their sea bass is excellent.

In Hudson's River, which runs from above Albany to New York, sturgeon is caught in large quantities. With us, this fish is in some measure considered as a luxury ; it is here far otherwise, it being the ordinary food of the common people in Albany : I have been informed, that as much

sturgeon may be purchased for sixpence as would serve a moderate sized family for a day : their neighbours in derision call it *Albany Beef*. The oysters here are of an enormous size, indeed so much so as rather to excite disgust. They are cheap, but in my opinion want flavour, though the inhabitants think highly of them.

They relate at New York a singular instance of the sagacity of lobsters. Previous to the American war, they were taken in large quantities near a place called Hell-gate ; during the war they all on a sudden disappeared, not one was to be found ; they afterwards returned to their old station, and were taken as before. It is thought that the firing of cannon which took place in that neighbourhood, during a sea engagement, alarmed them so much as to induce them to shift their quarters.

It is rather singular that in a country  
where

where farming is preferred to manufactures, butter should bring an exorbitant price at market: eighteen pence sterling a pound is about the average price of it; bread is cheaper than in England, but inferior in quality. New York is particularly to be noticed for its fruit market: pines, melons, peaches, and nectarines are in common use, melons and peaches particularly so; from three to six of the latter may be purchased for a penny: they are not however equal in flavour to those in England; they participate too much of the nature of the apricot, being rather mealy: that species which is distinguished by the name of *Cling-stone* is to be preferred, as being more juicy: the small fruits are not so good.

I cannot say much in favour of the wines which are imported into this country. That which is in most general use is Madeira, at least it is called by this name; it appears to



be a kind of Rhenish, brought, by manufacturing and composing, to bear some resemblance to Madeira in colour and flavour. I consider this wine as highly deleterious ; it possessing an acrid quality, which renders it very injurious to the stomach. For this you pay a York pound a gallon, or twelve shillings and sixpence sterling. You may occasionally meet with good Madeira, but it is only at the houses of a few of the principal merchants. Throughout America it is the custom to drink this wine after dinner, in the same manner as Port or Claret are drank in other countries.

Port wine is seldom used, it is therefore but indifferent ; it may be had for about ten shillings sterling a gallon.

As I am very partial to bottled porter, it was matter of mortification to me to find this article so dear, the retail price of it being about half-a-crown a bottle ; English draught

draught porter may be had for half the money. They brew a liquor here and at Philadelphia which they call porter; it is however wretched heavy stuff.

Spirituous liquors of all kinds are much cheaper than in England, there not existing the same cause for the imposition of duties.

New York is generally considered as the handsomest city in America. The public walk called the Battery, on the border of the North River, commands an extensive prospect, comprehending part of Long Island, Governor's Island, Staten Island, and the Jersey shore; this view is highly interesting. Long Island is in general well cultivated, but, like the other parts of York State, the soil is light and sandy. Frequent parties are made at New York, to go a-partridge-shooting on this Island: the bird is in fact pretty much the same with our quail in size and colour, being much smaller

than the partridge; they abound every where.

There are in the environs of New York two places of public entertainment, much frequented in summer — Belvidere and Brandling's gardens. The former is a handsome building, elegantly fitted up, situated on the East River; it is somewhat in the style of the coffee-house on the Mount at Liverpool. Here they drink, smoke, and discuss the politics of the day. In America all ranks of people smoke tobacco, not as with us from clay pipes, but rolled up in lengths of six or seven inches, and about the thickness of a quill, which they call *segars*.

The calculation of population has ever been liable to much error; but I should suppose, that that of New York might be rated at thirty thousand.

The theatre in New York is a small building, and the performers persons of very ordinary



ordinary talents in their profession, with the exception of a Mrs. Melmoth, whose declamatory powers are considerable. This lady is known on the English and Irish stages with reputation; but a difference with the managers of one of the London theatres induced this heroine to hazard the dangers of the Atlantic, and trust to personal merit for support in a foreign land.

The general mediocrity of talents in the New York actors is however but lightly felt, as it is certainly a *trait* in the American character, to have but little susceptibility of either wit or humour.

Silver money appears to be very plenty in this place, but gold is rarely seen; all the payments at the banks are made in dollars. This coin, though a foreign one, is universally current through the States; being that in which payments are made by the Spaniards, for the flour they receive from

from the Americans, which may be considered as the great staple of the latter. The value of a dollar in New York is equal to five shillings with us, though in England it would only pass for four shillings and sixpence.

The silver current coins in New York are,

	s.	d.
A York shilling, value	0	7½ sterling
A quarter dollar -	1	3
A dollar -	5	0

Hence it appears, that a dollar is eight shillings York currency. This currency is different in every State, a circumstance that perplexes strangers not a little. In Philadelphia the dollar only rates at seven shillings and sixpence sterling.

The current copper coins are our halfpence, and those which they call *cents*; which are nearly of the same value. The cent derives its denomination from the proportion

portion it bears to the integral coin the dollar, of which it is a hundredth part: it is coined in the United States.

The Americans have it in contemplation to establish a gold and silver coinage of their own; and it is said that they only wait the termination of their contest with the Indians, to turn their attention towards it.

It has often been remarked, that the comfort of private life is more invaded by little petty minute vexations, than by some of the weighty calamities of life. In this class may be ranged the very unsatisfactory conduct of the masters of inns, and of their underlings, in all the country parts of America. In travelling, no interest, no entreaty will induce the landlord to accommodate the stranger with a private room; well or ill, inclined to business or retirement, 'tis all one, he must mingle with the promiscuous herd whom chance has conducted



ducted to the same place ; they must all be lumped together at dinner and supper, at one common ordinary. It would be thought an infringement of democratic equality but to hint a wish to the contrary.—If this be liberty, I disclaim it !

Conceive to yourself, how awkward must be the situation of a gentleman travelling with ladies under his protection, to be compelled to associate with such boors as one is liable to meet at an American inn ! Believe me, that a galant man would have enough to do, in the course of the entertainment, to guard the hands and eyes of his fair friends from the dangerous assault of knives and forks, presented in every direction that awkwardness could suggest. This necessity for joining mixed companies on the road is particularly disagreeable to Englishmen.—The peculiar happiness of the people of our country consists in being what they call  
snug,

snug, which an Englishman can never be, if obliged to mix with large motley *groupes*. The very nature of snugness implies that which is small, and select; but, the principal grievance consists in being compelled to sleep in a room, in which there are probably three or four beds, and where guests of various descriptions are huddled together indiscriminately. A man need not be overburthened with delicacy, to find this last circumstance a very heavy tax on his good humour.

There is a strange similitude in all their meals at the inns. — Beef-steaks, spatch cocks, pickles, and coffee at breakfast, dinner, and tea, which is converted into the same meal as supper. — The coffee is, however, excluded from dinner. This is the eternal round, against which it would be in vain to protest. As to giving directions for any particular dish, it is entirely out of the question; this would be an at-

tempt to influence their established modes, which is certain of being resisted. Those who have been accustomed to inns and landlords in England, do not very easily digest this line of conduct: they think that, if willing to pay, they have a right to command that which is agreeable to them; and that if a gentleman were even accommodated with a single-bedded room, it would not have an *absolute tendency* to overturn their republican constitution. These are prejudices, however, of which they would very soon be corrected. The landlord of an American country inn is usually a most important personage; whether he be a captain, major, or colonel (and he is generally intitled one of the three), he rules with arbitrary sway; and however little he, or the people under him, study your convenience, he would take it in high dudgeon if you abated a tittle of that respect which  
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he thinks due to the rank he assumes. You would naturally expect, that, as a counterpoise to these inconveniences, one would ultimately find moderate charges—some kind of recompense. The case is far otherwise; their demands are exorbitant; and should you attempt to remonstrate, a sneering look seems to say, ‘ Help yourself if you can.’ You will probably think it strange, but it is literally a fact, that I could be accommodated at a genteel coffee-house in London for two-thirds of the expence I have been charged at one of those paltry inns. You occasionally meet with better usage, but such is the general treatment on the American roads.

I shall close this letter with one piece of serious advice to every gentleman who emigrates to America, which is, to avoid speculating in the American funds. About three or four years ago, by the manœuvres of  
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some persons at New York, they rose considerably beyond par; there was a kind of *rage* for purchasing, as in the case of our South Sea scheme; every man looked to treble his stock—when, lo! the bubble burst, and stocks fell one-half in three days, involving hundreds in distress. This affair made a considerable *eclat* at the time: some of the leaders in the plan were committed to prison, and one of the principal I believe yet remains there.

I remember some time before this, that I was in company in England, when a gentleman was describing the flourishing state of the American stocks, and recommending to a common friend of ours to purchase. I urged, on the contrary, that the present favourable appearance must be fallacious, that one could not with confidence look to the permanence of an extraordinary rise in stocks, in any country, unless that rise were  
founded

founded on a great surplus of money, a highly flourishing state of commerce and manufactures, and the enjoyment of peace, none of which contributed to cause the American rise. This advice prevailed, and my friend saved that half of his money, which would have been lost had he speculated.

I knew some English gentlemen at New York, who had various stock-jobbing engagements at the time. They fulfilled their part, by accepting the stock at its reduced value, but could not prevail on those to whom they had stipulated to make it over, to receive it on the same terms. This gave rise to suits at law, which were not terminated when I left the country. It should appear from hence, that stock-jobbing contracts are not illegal as with us.



## LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

London, Sept. 1794.

THE distance from New York to Philadelphia is about ninety-six miles ; the greatest part of the road lies through the province of Jersey. On leaving New York, you cross a ferry a mile and a half in breadth, and land on the Jersey coast, where there are stages ready at stated hours to convey you to Philadelphia. A journey through this country is pleasing, as presenting a scene of high cultivation. Some of the greatest farmers in the States reside here. It is further interesting, as recalling to memory many of the principal actions in the late war, which were fought in this country. You pass through Princetown, where there  
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is a college, and Trenton, where Washington captured eleven hundred Hessians. My curiosity had been much excited by the accounts I had received of Philadelphia, of which I had formed a high idea. To see a city which had been constructed on a regular plan, whose streets cut each other at right angles, would be to me a novelty; but the view of it was far from gratifying my expectation—this very regularity, after a short time, gives it an air of sameness that fatigues. Philadelphia is the present seat of government, which will be removed from hence, after the year 1800, to the new city of Washington, which is at present constructing in Virginia, on the banks of the river Potowmac, a navigable branch of the Chesapeak. This city is, in my opinion, by no means so agreeable for a place of residence as New York; the influence of the Quakers, which is considerable, rendering

the manners of the inhabitants more formal than at New York. This sect of persons intended, when I was in that city, to use every effort to induce Congress to suppress the Theatre, attributing the plague, or yellow fever, which afflicted that place in the Summer and Autumn of last year, to the anger of the Deity, on account of the encouragement which had been given to so profane an entertainment. Peace to their pious error! The performers had removed to Baltimore on account of the disorder.

This disorder, which caused such a ravage among the human species in this city, has been attributed to various causes. The medical men were as usual divided in opinion;—some attributed it to the effluvia arising from a cargo of damaged coffee which had been landed from the West-Indies; others declared that it was indigenous, and had its origin in the city, proceeding



ceeding from the necessary houses there not having proper sewers to carry off the ordure ; whilst others asserted that the infection was brought there by the crew of a French vessel from one of the West-India islands. Among opinions so different, it is not for me to offer any. I arrived in Philadelphia about five weeks after its cessation ; it was remarked that the French and Negroes suffered least by the disorder, probably from some peculiarity in their mode of living.

At the commencement of the disorder, it was estimated that the city of Philadelphia contained about 56000 inhabitants ; of these one half are supposed to have fled to the country, after the disorder had made some progress. When it subsided, a calculation was made of those who had perished ; it was found that their number amounted to 4040, a dreadful mortality out of 28000, in the

course of three months. Whilst some of the citizens distinguished themselves by a degree of intrepid humanity, it is to be regretted that too many were guilty of the most narrow selfishness. The dearest connections of social life were but a frail security for attention at such a crisis. Husbands and wives, children and parents, mutually deserted each other. Families who were uninfected, frequently closed their doors to cut off all communication. There were even instances of respectable tradesmen, from want of business, wandering into the country in quest of laborious employment to support existence. Neither did the country afford that asylum which was expected; a few characters, touched by the distresses to which humanity is incident, were however found, who gave general admission to the wretched fugitives: many perished in the fields for want of reception. It was a com-

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mon usage in villages twenty miles round Philadelphia, as soon as a stranger appeared whom they suspected to come from the city, to rush out with pitchforks and other rustic instruments, and drive them away with imprecations and menaces.

In the cities and great towns, a body of militia kept guard in all the avenues of approach, to repel those who would not take an oath that they had not been in Philadelphia for a certain time. The usual symptoms of this disorder were, a yellowness over the face and body, and in most cases a black vomit.

I never could understand that any remedy was discovered which could be deemed a specific. Every physician consulted his own genius and experience, and had recourse to bleeding, blistering, and the administration of mercury as he judged expedient. It may give some idea of the supposed



virulence of this disorder, when it is mentioned, that many physicians were themselves in the list of the fugitives. It seems to have been discriminated from the plague by one circumstance, namely, that some persons were visited by more than one attack.

Strange as it may appear, a gentleman of great humanity, who remained in the city, declared that the sight of a regular funeral gave him the greatest satisfaction he had experienced for a length of time; he concluded from thence, that the disorder must have abated considerably, by permitting friends to pay the last duty to a departed connection. Previous to this, the bodies had been flung indiscriminately into large graves in the town and neighbourhood. The wife of a man in the vicinity of Philadelphia was seized with this disorder; the husband, wholly regardless of the endearing connection

tion which subsisted between them, left her to receive such assistance as chance might offer, after having given previous directions to have her coffin made; the wife struggled through, and recovered. The husband returned, fell a victim to the fever, and was buried in the very coffin he had intended for his wife. This circumstance was, with much appearance of reason, deemed a stroke of providential justice.

The markets of this city are furnished abundantly, the price of provisions is much the same as at New York; the charges at the boarding-houses are however almost universally higher, the usual rates being from seven to eight dollars a week. Wood for firing is an article extremely dear both at this place and at New York. This arises from the high price of labour. The inns and hotels of this place are very indifferent; the City Coffee-house in South Second street,

street, is the usual place of resort; it is without exception, in its appearance, the most gloomy and forbidding residence that I have met with. It is at this coffee-house that the sailing and arrival of vessels are registered. There is, I was latterly informed, a better hotel at one extremity of the town, but its situation is inconvenient. Philadelphia is built on the River Delaware, at the distance of 150 miles from the sea; its trade is very considerable. How far it may be affected by founding the new city of Washington, time alone can determine. The heat of this city is said to be extreme in Summer, at which season the principal inhabitants retire to their country residences. There are many pleasant villages within twenty miles of Philadelphia, where a stranger may be agreeably accommodated. Too much cannot be said in praise of the religious toleration that prevails in this country.



country. Whether this proceeds from a great stock of religion, or a small one, the great Supreme can alone determine. It is however attended with beneficial effects. I heard of a singular instance of it whilst at Philadelphia:—A methodist chapel was to be founded; the clergy of all the different sects assisted its minister in laying the first stone. It were to be wished that it were possible to imitate this line of conduct in this country;—this is however I believe impossible. Politics have with us got implicated with religion; nor can it, after a contest and jealousy of so long standing, be deemed an improper caution in our government, to require from those who are to enter on places of power and trust, an occasional act of conformity with the established religion.

The streets of Philadelphia are named from their relative situation with respect

to the high street—as North First Street, North Second Street, &c. The original plan of Penn, the founder of this city, has not been completed, as there are several lots towards the river Schuylkill, which have not been built on. Frosts in Winter often set in with great severity in the river Delaware, so as to prevent vessels from sailing till towards Spring. New York does not labour under this disadvantage, as it is not above twenty miles from the sea; its harbour is almost always open.

There is a custom prevails at Philadelphia, which in some degree operates as a check on the conduct of captains of passage vessels, which is, for the passengers to draw up an advertisement, to be inserted in one of the public prints, declaring their satisfaction with the captain's conduct during the voyage; when they refuse to do this, it affects his character.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

London, Sept. 1794.

**T**HE new inland State of Kentucky lies south-west of Pennsylvania, and is watered by the great river Ohio. From all the accounts I could receive in America (and I was inquisitive on the subject), I have reason to believe that it is superior in soil to every other of the States. But in speaking of it, we must consider it as a desert; its cultivation is so comparatively small. If a man can relinquish society, this State I should think would better suit the views of one who emigrates for agricultural purposes, than any other; its soil is said to be rich and deep, and its climate, tempered by local circumstances, to be peculiarly acceptable.

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The Alleganny mountains, which the Americans term the *spinal bone* of America, border on this country. But having mentioned the goodness of the soil, and the comparative temperature of the climate, it is to be remarked, that it labours under the same disadvantages, with respect to establishment, with the other States.—It is equally difficult to grub the trees here as elsewhere; labour is equally dear, and the same noxious vapours are to be dreaded wherever new earth is turned up. Its *peculiar* disadvantages are, its inland situation, which in a great measure excludes it from a market for its produce, and must prove, till a more extended population takes place, a perpetual barrier to any beneficial recompence for labour. Did the Ohio run eastward instead of southward, it would be otherwise. The next is, that the Indians are at war at this very period with the Americans, for the country

country bordering on the Ohio. Those who have hitherto inhabited Kentucky, are a hardy race of men, of the lower class of the Irish, rendered ferocious by the constant alarms they are subject to from the inroads of the Indians.

War is carried on, on both sides, with the most unrelenting animosity: the continual conflicts they sustain, in defence of their families and property, have rendered these people as savage as those they encounter; they neither give nor take quarter, nor is it unfrequent among them to make parties to hunt the Indians, and return exulting from a successful expedition, in which they have brought off scalps and other trophies, in the same manner as sportsmen with us after the fortunate run of a fox.

How far such friends, or such enemies, can be acceptable as neighbours, they can  
best

best determine, who think of establishing themselves in that country.

Among the paradoxes of the day, one of the most extraordinary to my apprehension is, that this should have been selected as a place of settlement, by some modern philosophers who have emigrated. The inroads of uncultivated savages can but ill accord with the calm pursuit of philosophers. Were I to form a conjecture on this subject, it would be, that after the edge of curiosity is somewhat blunted, and the inconveniences of an infant settlement experienced, these persons will first retreat to the cultivated States, and finally return to their native country. Those who cultivate science for the advantage of mankind, ought to have ease, leisure, and a favourable situation, none of which can be found in Kentucky; they can have no society but among themselves;



selves, and it is not always that philosophers make the best society to each other, nor will it be long before they miss the conveniences to which they have been accustomed.

Though I do not admire the politics of those literary characters who cannot discover liberty in England, and who appear to have shaken off the restraints of civil society (which we voluntarily submit to, to increase our happiness), to return to a state of nature, I feel a respect for science, and its professors even in the wilderness. Of one point I wish them to be sensible; that permanent admiration is no *trait* in the American character.

A new race of men have within these few years started up in America, distinguished by the name of *land-jobbers*. These persons, by themselves, or agents, purchase large tracts of land on speculation. Many

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have bought in at the rate of 4d. and 6d. an acre, what they have afterwards disposed of at the rate of a dollar. Large fortunes have been acquired in this manner ; but it requires considerable judgment in land, and an accurate knowledge of a variety of circumstances, to make such purchases as will turn to account. Those who thus speculate, rely on the probable chance of quick population from emigration. One bad consequence immediately results from this to the United States, by rendering those lands in the neighbourhood of cultivated tracts, too dear for ordinary purchasers, who are from hence compelled to retire into the back country to make cheap purchases; a circumstance that prevents that close connected situation which would increase the general strength, at the same time that it would contribute to the more comfortable accommodation of individuals.

As

As many ingenious artificers and mechanics have left England, with the idea of rising quickly to affluence, I will treat briefly on the subject.

Most of these persons, on their arrival in America, are astonished that they do not get immediate employment; they had been taught to believe, that manufacturers and tradesmen would vie with each other to engage them.

Their want of success may be attributed to two causes; one, that there are but few manufactories in America, in general they depend on England for supply; the other, that in a country like England, where manufactures and mechanics have been brought to such a degree of perfection, there has in consequence ensued a *division of labour*, which renders a man only competent to one particular branch of a trade: wherever this is the case, the workman would not stand the



smallest chance for employment in America, as a man must know every part of a trade, or he is useless. There are, as I have already mentioned, few manufactories—few persons having the ability to risk the expence of extensive workshops, and the various tools and machines that such undertakings require; at the same time being sensible how inferior their commodities must be to those of England, and that their whole manufacture might be arrested in its progress, by the desertion of a principal workman, whose loss it would probably be a length of time before they could supply.

Indeed most of the workmen who have been so fortunate as to make a little money retire into the back countries, where they can have land cheap, preferring the activity of a farming life, to the sedentary employment of an artisan in a city. It is, besides, more reputable in an agricultural country,  
and

and holds out a better prospect of decent establishment for a family. Few ships return to England, Scotland, or Ireland, which do not carry back some of those unfortunate adventurers, who are many of them obliged to make up the expence of the passage, by disposing of the implements of their trade. The only workman that I know of who could be certain of employment is a carpenter ; there is an universal demand for his labour in all parts.

As to those unhappy people called redemptioners, who stipulate to pay for their passage by years of servitude, it is to be regretted that the justice of nations should permit such iniquitous contracts. This class of people are treated worse than the negroes ; the master knows that he has but a temporary property in them, and is therefore determined to extract the utmost profit from their labour while they are subject

to him. Attention to his interest, secures better treatment to his negroes: should they die in consequence of hard usage, it is so much money lost.

The country people in America are ingenious at supplying their own wants; the same man can often act as carpenter, mason, and farrier, weave, make shoes, and even saddles and bridles—what we vulgarly term *a jack of all trades*, is the man for the people in the country. The great number of these renders workmen who are strangers unnecessary.

The disadvantage which a man who emigrates, and turns shopkeeper without connections in the country, labours under, is this, that by the time he comes to know who are persons of credit and responsibility, he has lost his property.

Whatever has been said as matter of advice to the gentleman who emigrates, will



more or less apply to the little farmer. Such a man having made his little purchase, hurries into the woods with his family: to him society is but a secondary object; he toils incessantly till his labour is probably arrested by the ague; this disorder is very prevalent in America, and seldom fails to attack those who turn up new ground, or are in damp situations. Those who have been afflicted with this disorder, well know how enervating it is, and that it renders a man incapable of any kind of employment. Thus he probably languishes for months on a bed of sickness, incapable of any exertion, though his hopes of a harvest were dependent on it.

The consequence of this disorder might be regarded as highly afflictive, even if confined to the master of the family; how much more when it is considered (as usually happens) as extending to the wife  
and

and children! The best remedy for this complaint is certainly a strong generous wine; but how are the finances of our little farmer to sustain the expence of administering such a remedy to a whole family? When I have beheld the pale, languid, emaciated countenances of such people who could with difficulty crawl about to perform the most ordinary duties of a family, it was impossible not to draw a mental comparison between them and a family of the same condition in England.

The former paying no rent and few taxes are poor; the latter paying rent and heavy taxes are comparatively rich;—the former, uncertain of a market for their produce, want that stimulus which is necessary to every exertion; the latter, certain of a market, reckon infallibly on produce and money as mutually convertible—In fine, the former, in the course of their culture,  
imbibe

imbibe disease at every pore ; whilst to the latter, labour brings along with it at once health and wealth. Independent of what I have mentioned, the inconveniences of an infant settlement in America are many :— if a horse or cow are wanting, it often requires the labour of half a day to recover them. From the want of inclosures, the animal frequently strays into the woods, and is often lost ; nor has the farmer any other guide to a recovery than what he finds in the noise of a bell suspended at the neck of the animal. Add to this the want of animal manure, which, from the extensive range of the cattle, and the scantiness of stock, proves of no account.

Nor will the loss of his former little society be unfelt by the little farmer ; at festive meetings in America, all his pleasantries, his traditional jokes, and *his good things*, which were wont to set his village club-room in a



roar, would all be unfelt, nor excite a single risible muscle in the countenance of the formal American. Wit and humour are very local; American wit consists in making a highly advantageous sale of a horse or a farm—and humour, in saying quarter-hour graces before and after meals. Let the Englishman of the condition in life I have described, who wishes to emigrate, pause for a moment; let him reflect, that the step he is about to take will be decisive, and that a man of the lower order, who is encumbered with a family\*, crosses the Atlantic *but once*—For such a man there is no retreat.

Again I address the country gentleman who plans to emigrate. I wish him to recollect, that without extraordinary exertions of in-

*Note.*—I could not help smiling at the American definition of *a man of family*—With them it signifies one who has got a wife and five or six children.

dustry,

dustry, little can be expected from American culture; that many circumstances combine to impede it, and that the same exertion made at home would be more certain of its reward by an increase of property. Does a reduction of circumstances induce such a man to emigrate through a false pride? Let him consider that England is a large scene; that in no country can he so well arrange himself as in this; and that from the quantity of landed property always ready to be disposed of, it can never be more than the work of a few weeks to settle himself suitably—He can then begin life afresh, equally well as though he had passed over to a new world.—He can suit his society to his circumstances, and, in a new situation, commence his plan of œconomy without the pain of *being seen to descend*. Has he lived in the north, let him turn his face to the south—in the south, to the north.—

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That man is ill qualified for American society, whom pride induces to emigrate, when the commonest artisan would not hesitate to look him steadily in the face, and inform him that he was his equal. He who would emigrate from such a motive, might be compared to one who, endeavouring to avoid the sting of a wasp, would seek refuge among bee-hives. Let the man who seeks to avoid partial inconvenience by such a step, be impressed with one truth, namely, that mortification in *one* instance may preclude mortifications in others.

But, it may be asked, ought no description of persons to emigrate? The reply is obvious—The guilty *must*, and the very unfortunate *will*, though the prejudices of the natives are too apt to confound the latter with the former.

Believe me to be, &c.

THE END.